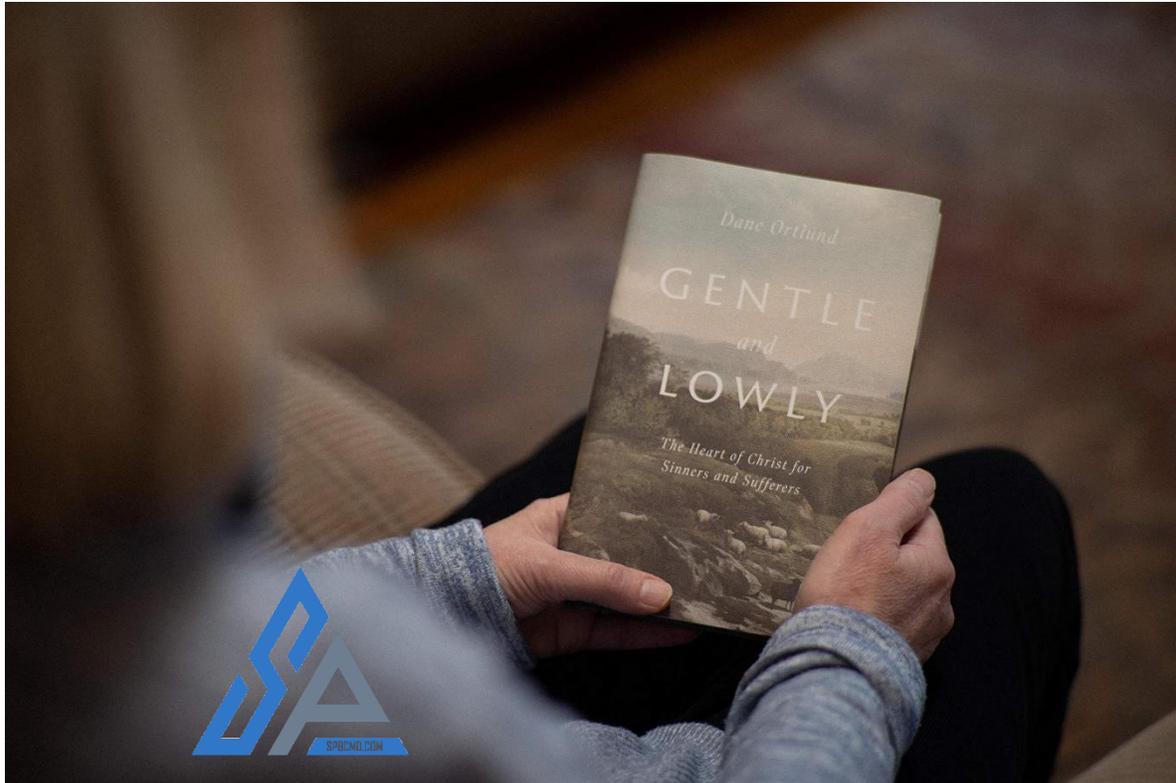


**GENTLE & LOWLY:  
THE HEART OF CHRIST FOR SINNERS  
AND SUFFERERS  
By Dane Ortlund**



***A Study Guide by Pastor David Brown @  
Severna Park Baptist Church***

## About

- This study guide is designed for individual and group study with reading the titled book: Gentle & Lowly. Group study is preferred for learning from the insights, questions, and applications in spiritual community.
- This study guide is an unofficial guide and designed to be brief (summary not in-depth) and simple (ordinary not scholastic). Anyone, without training (but with preparation) should be able to read the book and use this study guide and have constructive discussion. If you are seeking an official, deeper, and extended study guide, you can find at Crossway:  
<https://www.crossway.org/books/gentle-and-lowly-study-guide-tpb/>.
- While it is ideal for participants to have read the book, each session will include Scriptures to read during the group study. Therefore, technically, a participant could have missed reading the book chapters and still find ways to be included in the discussion. In all, please take the time to get out your Bible and read the listed passages, as well as the book chapters.
- Each section could be discussed over a single session, for four studies total. Or your group may spread readings and discussion over multiple sessions as needed.
- Overall, each group study should include time for participants to connect in friendship with encouragement and prayer requests. Participants should be encouraged to share insights and questions they have from the readings and/or their personal faith journey.

## Introduction – Chapter 5

- ◇ Ice Breaker: **What is your favorite aspect about Jesus and Christianity? Least favorite?**
  
- ◇ This is a book about the heart of Jesus Christ. **So, who is Jesus? How would you describe Jesus to someone who is unfamiliar with Him?**
  
- ◇ Read Matthew 11:28-30.
  - **How does Jesus' invitation to "come to me" stand in contrast to many other religious perspectives?**
  
  - Coming to Jesus is a relationship that cannot be fast-tracked or short-cut. **Describe** the slow but steady pace of trusting Jesus, walking in obedience, and living by faith.
  
  - **How would you describe a person who is "laboring and heavy laden, and in need of rest"?** The first word "labor" implies internal weariness, whereas the second phrase "heavy-laden" is external weight caused by demands and commands placed by others.
  
  - **What does it mean to be yoked with Jesus?** A yoke is made for exerting effort – pulling, dragging, hauling, tugging. However, a yoke makes the work easier and the burden lighter because it attaches you to another. Ultimately a yoke was made for training, where an untrained animal was attached to one trained. Can you relate the implications for discipleship with Jesus?

- Following Jesus often seems challenging and sometimes confusing. **Why does Jesus claim His yoke is easy and His burden is light?**
  
- Based on chapter 1 (pp. 25-32), **what insights are meaningful for why Jesus claims to be “gentle and lowly”?**

◇ Read Hebrews 4:14-16.

- Ortlund writes, “In our pain, Jesus is pained; in our suffering, he feels the suffering as his own even though it isn’t – not that his invincible divinity is threatened, but in the sense that his heart is feelingly drawn into our distress. His human nature engages our troubles comprehensively. His is a love that cannot be held back when he sees his people in pain... Our tendency is to feel intuitively that the more difficult life gets the more alone we are. As we sink further into pain, we sink further into isolation. The Bible corrects us. Our pain never outstrips what he himself shares in. We are never alone. That sorrow that feels so isolating, so unique, was endured by him in the past and is now shouldered by him in the present.” (p.46, 48).
  
- **How helpful is it to know that Jesus can empathize with our weaknesses and has total solidarity with us? Consider sharing any specific and personal examples.**

◇ Read Hebrews 5:2; Isaiah 40:1-11.

- Ortlund writes, “Whatever our offense, [Jesus] deals gently with us. If we never come to him, we will experience a judgment so fierce it will be like a double-edged sword coming out of his mouth at us. If we do come to him, as fierce as his lion-like judgment would have been against us, so deep will be his lamb-like tenderness for us. We will be enveloped in one or the other. To no one will Jesus be neutral.” (p.54)

**How does the way Jesus responds to a sinner’s repentance compare to the way humanity is prone to respond to a sinner’s repentance?**

**How can we grow to become more like Jesus in our response toward repentant sinners?**

◇ **Based on the readings from this study, how is your perception of God and Jesus changing or reinforced?**

◇ **What burdens are keeping you from rest and a taking a next step of growth in your relationship with Jesus? Take a few moments to share in prayer as a group or with partners in your group.**

## Chapters 6 – 11

- ◇ Ice Breaker: **What is your favorite type of bread?** Read John 6:35-40 and Ortlund's summary from John Bunyan about these verses from pp.60-61. **What insights stand out to you?**
  
- ◇ **How does God's loyal love to never cast out also relate to His discipline against sin?** (cf. pp. 71-75)
  - **How has God's disciplined love been evident in your life?**
  
  - **Read and reflect** on the balance of love and discipline in the following verses:  
Luke 15:20-24  
  
John 4:39-42  
  
Romans 2:2-11  
  
Ephesians 2:4-10  
  
Hebrews 12:7-15.
  
- ◇ Ortlund relates several theological concepts. Read pp.78-80, as well as utilize other biblical study resources to help you define and relate the following words.

- Christ's Atonement:
  - Christ's Justification:
  - Christ's Intercession:
- ◇ **What is the difference between Christ's intercession and advocacy (cf. p.87, ff.)?**
- ◇ Ortlund relates theological concepts to practical faith for the family. He asks: "What is it that the children whom we greet in the hallways of our church need? Yes, they need friends, and encouragement, and academic support, and good square meals. But might it be that the truest need, the thing that will sustain and oxygenate them when all these other vital needs go unmet, is a sense of the attractiveness of who Jesus is for them? How he actually feels about them? With our own kids, if we are parents, what's our job? The question could be answered with a hundred valid responses. But at the center, our job is to show our kids that even our best love is a shadow of a greater love. To put a sharper edge on it: to make the tender heart of Christ irresistible and unforgettable. Our goal is that our kids would leave the house... and be unable to live the rest of their lives believing that their sins and sufferings repel Christ." (p.100).

**What are some practical and specific ways we, as a church, and you, as parents or individuals, will seek to implement to help accomplish this aim for children? (cf. Read Matthew 18:4-6; 19:13-15; 23:12-29)**

- ◇ Spend some time praying for one another. Pray for persons to find their rest in Christ. Pray for parents (young and old) to initiate expressions of irresistible love to their children. Pray for children within our church to grow in meaningful faith. Pray for workers in our church's Children's and Youth Ministries to minister with truth and grace.

## **Chapters 12 – 18**

### **◇ Ice-Breaker:**

- **What are 2-3 activities your family enjoys sharing with other families?**
- **Who are your two best friends and share why?**

**◇ Read Matthew 9:10; 11:19; Luke 15:1. What does it mean that Jesus was a friend to sinners? Based on this reality, what are some potential applications for us today? Who are the “tax collectors” around us today?**

**◇ Ortlund writes “The Spirit takes what we read in the Bible and believe on paper about Jesus’s heart and moves it from theory to reality, from doctrine to experience.” (p.122)**

**What comes to your mind when you think about the Holy Spirit?**

**How does the Holy Spirit make friendship with Jesus more real?**

**What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer?**

**◇ Read and discuss the roles of the Holy Spirit in these verses:  
John 3:6-7**

John 14:16

John 16:7-13

Romans 8:9-11, 26-28;

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

2 Corinthians 3:18

Galatians 4:6; 5:18-25.

- ◇ Ortlund reflects on a variety of passages: Hosea 11, Lamentations 3; Isaiah 55:6-9, and later Jeremiah 31:20 to express the glory of God is His great grace toward His creation. He says, “We need to understand that however long we have been walking with the Lord, whether we have never read the whole Bible or have a PhD in it, we have a perverse resistance to this.” (p.166)
  - **When you think about the glory of God, do you first think about His greatness or His grace? How are these different and yet combined (cf. p.147, ff.)? Why is it important to keep both God’s majesty and mercy in equal proportion to our views of Him?**
  
- ◇ **What are some specific ways we can reveal the greatness of God by reflecting the grace of God? How does this perspective change or shape our evangelism/witnessing efforts? For one example, read Mark 2:1-12.**
  
- ◇ Spend some time praying for those who do not view God as rich in mercy. Pray for witnessing opportunities of individuals in your group. Pray that you, like Jesus, would become a better friend of sinners.

## Chapters 19 – 23

### ◇ Ice-Breaker:

- **What special gift have you received recently?**
- **What is your favorite Bible verse/passage/person?**

### ◇ Read Ephesians 2:1-10. This passage is a familiar and favorite for many. Ortlund describes

Ephesians 2:1-3 as why we need God's salvation: we are spiritually dead.

- “Christ was sent not to mend wounded people or wake sleepy people or advise confused people or inspire bored people or spur on lazy people or educate ignorant people, but to raise dead people.” (p.175)

Ephesians 2:5-6 as what God did to provide salvation: made us alive.

Ephesians 2:4 explains why God chose to save us: God is rich in mercy. The only thing God is called “rich” in, is mercy. (p.172)

- **How do these verses and understanding impact the way we should view ourselves and our sin against God?**

- **In what are you rich?**

### ◇ God's salvation is transformative from death unto life. Therefore, there is nothing that should hold or hinder us from experiencing God's grace, freedom, and hope. “Whatsoever Christ is freed from, I am freed from it. It can no more hurt me than it can hurt him now in heaven.” (p.178)

- **Where in your life are you experiencing less than what God designed in His salvation and desires for your spiritual growth?**



# NOTES